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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 19 April 1993, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. DE ARAUJO CASTRO (Brazil)

- Opening of the session
- Statement by the Chairman
- Adoption of the agenda
- Organization of work
- General exchange of views

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: I declare open the 174th meeting of the United Nations Disarmament Commission - the first meeting of its 1993 substantive session.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: In welcoming all delegations to the 1993 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, I wish to express once again my thanks for the honour members have conferred on me and on my country, Brazil, by electing me to serve as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for 1993.

I have participated for years in the multilateral consideration of matters related to disarmament and arms control, and it is for me a significant challenge to be entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the work of the Disarmament Commission; but it is a task in which I am sure I shall be able to count on the cooperation and the support of all delegations, of the Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur of the Commission, and of the secretariat.

I look forward in particular to working with the Chairmen of the Working Groups responsible for dealing with the three substantive items on our agenda: Ambassador Victor Batiouk of Ukraine, Chairman of Working Group I, on nuclear disarmament; Ambassador Wolfgang Hoffmann of Germany, Chairman of Working Group II, on the regional approach to disarmament; and Ambassador Luvsangiin Erdenechuluun of Mongolia, Chairman of Working Group III, on the role of science and technology.

I know that we shall be able to rely on the expert support of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and, in particular, of the Secretary of the Disarmament Commission, Mr. Kuo-Chung Lin.

(The Chairman)

As we begin our substantive proceedings this year, I am confident that I speak for all of us in paying a special tribute to Ambassador André Erdös of Hungary for his notable performance as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission in 1992. The task we have before us today would be much more complex if we had not benefited from the results achieved last year under his very able guidance.

The 1993 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission is opening at a crucial juncture in the history of the United Nations. In the past few years the world scene has been going through a process of constant and at times unpredictable, painful and dramatic change. In an effort to respond adequately to the challenges and opportunities of this changing world, our Organization is also undergoing momentous transformations.

Many developments, positive as well as negative, that have unfolded since the end of the cold-war period have underscored the relevance and the continued, if not increased, importance and urgency of measures of arms control, arms limitation and disarmament.

The changing international situation requires us to take a fresh and unprejudiced look at many of the problems we have been trying to deal with for many years - in many cases, with only a very limited degree of success. The three substantive items we have on our agenda for this year - nuclear disarmament, regional approaches to disarmament, and the role of science and technology - as well as those that have been proposed for future inclusion in the agenda - non-proliferation and international arms transfers - are all, without exception, areas to which the changing world circumstances appear to recommend enhanced multilateral attention, understanding and cooperation, not without a clear sense of urgency.

(The Chairman)

In this connection, the Disarmament Commission has an unquestionbly important role to play as the specialized, deliberative body within the United Nations disarmament machinery that allows for in-depth deliberations on specific disarmament issues, with a view to the preparation of guidelines and concrete recommendations.

In the reconvened session it held last month to reassess the multilateral arms control and disarmament machinery, the First Committee of the General Assembly adopted a resolution (General Assembly resolution 47/54 G) under which the Assembly reaffirmed this role of the Disarmament Commission as a specialized deliberative body within the United Nations disarmament machinery and also stressed the importance of further enhancing the dialogue and cooperation among the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament.

The views submitted by Member States in response to General Assembly decision 47/422 contain certain common elements which reflect the relevance that the international community attaches to the role of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

The Disarmament Commission is seen in particular as the universal forum that provides all States with the opportunity to participate in deliberations on disarmament and arms-control issues, thus involving and engaging States of all regions in this process of concern to the entire international community.

The universality of the Commission gives all States, large and small, developed and developing, the opportunity to participate equitably in the consideration of matters related to their legitimate interests. At the same time, it serves the healthy purpose of engaging these States, which might otherwise feel excluded from participation in the decision-making process, in deliberations leading to agreements designed to command universal acceptance.

(The Chairman)

Importance is also attached to the distinct mandate of the Commission as a deliberative forum for the focused consideration of issues that, on the one hand, cannot be debated in depth during the annual sessions of the First Committee and, on the other, have not yet been defined sufficiently to be taken up for negotiation.

The Disarmament Commission is seen as having a distinct role to play in promoting conceptual discussion, consensus-building and the identification of global and regional measures for negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament, in regional forums or elsewhere. In this connection, the United Nations Disarmament Commission has an important part to play in encouraging, supporting, supplementing and preparing the groundwork for disarmament negotiations conducted in other forums.

It has been noted that the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament have distinct but complementary and interrelated roles and that there is a need for a greater degree of dialogue and coordination, for closer links and for a strengthened relationship among these three bodies. This idea came to be reflected in operative paragraph 8 of the resolution adopted by the First Committtee on 12 March 1993, and subsequently adopted by the General Assembly.

Over the past few years, the Disarmament Commission has been engaged in a carefully considered process of review and reform, with a view to enhancing its functioning and efficiency. Under the resolution it adopted last month, the General Assembly took note of the progress achieved by the Disarmament Commission in its ongoing process of reform and recommended that every effort be made to continue to enhance the working methods of the Commission so as to enable it to give focused consideration to a limited number of priority issues

(The Chairman)

in the field of disarmament. To that end it welcomed the decision of the Commission to move its agenda towards a three-item phased approach.

In 1991 and 1992, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Peter Hohenfellner of Austria and Ambassador André Erdös of Hungary, respectively, the Disarmament Commission proceeded to implement its reform programme, based on the 1990 document on "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission".

It concentrated its work in these two years on the consideration of four substantive items: first, objective information on military matters; secondly, process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons; thirdly, regional approach to disarmament within the context of global security; and, fourthly, the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields.

(The Chairman)

Last year, the Commission concluded the consideration of the first of these four items, adopting a set of guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters which was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly.

This significant result is to be credited to the dedication and diplomatic skill displayed by Ambassador Carl-Magnus Hyltenius of Sweden in the chairmanship of the Working Group on objective information, as well as to the constructive and flexible attitude with which all delegations contributed to making this a successful and significant test case of the working methods of the Commission.

In 1992 and 1993, the Commission began and continued its consideration of the three other items on its substantive agenda, those relating to nuclear disarmament, to the regional approach to disarmament and to the role of science and technology. The progress achieved to date in the deliberations on each of these three questions is reflected in the reports submitted by the Commission to the General Assembly (A/46/42 and A/47/42) and is linked to a large extent to the many thoughtful working papers which were submitted by delegations or groups of delegations and distributed as documents of the Commission.

Last year, the Commission further refined the reform process embodied in the "Ways and means" document. In accordance with operative paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 47/54 A, the Commission decided at the organizational meeting held on 8 December 1992 to begin moving its agenda in the direction of a three-item phased approach, by which, in principle, at each annual substantive session of the Commission one substantive item will be in the first year of consideration, one item in its middle year and item in its third or concluding year.

(The Chairman)

As noted in resolution 47/54 A, 1993 will be a transitional year for the Disarmament Commission. The Commission decided that at this substantive session work should be concluded on two of the items on its substantive agenda - the item on the regional approach to disarmament and the item on the role of science and technology. The Commission also decided to hold over the item on nuclear disarmament for conclusion in 1994.

In the course of the consultations and organizational meetings held since last December, it was not possible to reach agreement on the inclusion of a new substantive item on our agenda for 1993, as referred to in operative paragraph 8 (b) (iii) of resolution 47/54 A. It was understood, however, that at the organizational session to be held in December 1993, in preparation for next year's session of the Commission, we will consider, along with other suggestions that may be presented, the proposal made in the course of the organizational meetings that we include in the substantive agenda for 1994 the two items mentioned in preambular paragraphs 3 and 4 of resolution 47/54 A, related respectively to non-proliferation and to international arms transfers.

We will have a heavy workload at this session of the Commission, but it is my expectation that we will be able to achieve significant results in each of the three substantive items on our agenda.

We are fortunate that, to conduct the work of the three Working Groups, we will be able to count on very able and dedicated Chairmen, who have already undertaken informal consultations prior to the opening of this session. I am confident that, under their guidance and with the cooperation of all delegations, we shall be able successfully to conclude our work this year.

I am sure that we all share the expectation that, by the end of its 1993 substantive session, the Disarmament Commission will be in a position to adopt

(The Chairman)

a set of guidelines and recommendations both on the regional approach to disarmament and on the role of science and technology. It is also my hope that we will be able to establish a solid basis for the completion in 1994 of our work on the item on nuclear disarmament.

I invite all delegations to participate actively and constructively in the general exchange of views in the plenary and in the work of the three Working Groups. With members' support, I will spare no effort in seeking to ensure that our 1993 session will produce meaningful results and contribute to consolidating and further enhancing the role of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The CHAIRMAN: As members of the Commission may recall, at our organization session we tentatively approved the provisional agenda before the Commission. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the agenda as contained in document A/CN.10/L.32.

The agenda was adopted.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: As members may recall, in 1990 the Commission adopted a text of reform measures, entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission", contained in document A/CN.10/137. The implementation of these reform measures has been reflected in the organizational arrangements for the current substantive session which were agreed to at the Commission's organizational session. The arrangements included the approval of the provisional agenda; the establishment of three working groups on the three substantive agenda items; the appointment of chairmen for the working groups; a decision on the date and duration of the

(The Chairman)

1993 substantive session; and a general programme of work for the current session.

In the spirit of the reform programme, the Chairmen of the Working Groups have utilized the pre-session period for various types of informal consultations on their respective agenda items. I am convinced that these pre-session consultations will greatly facilitate the substantive work of the current session.

As in the past, the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission will begin with a general exchange of views allowing delegations the opportunity to make statements on any or all agenda items. A total of four meetings, today and tomorrow, are allocated to this purpose as indicated in the general programme of work and weekly timetable before the Commission. The Working Groups will begin meeting on Wednesday, 21 April.

I should like to invite those delegations wishing to make general statements to inscribe their names on the list of speakers with the Secretariat as soon as possible if they have not already done so. The deadline for such inscriptions is 1 p.m. today. The Secretariat has requested me to indicate that it would appreciate receiving 25 copies of written statements, if possible.

If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to proceed in this manner.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: As to the allocation of time for each agenda item, a weekly timetable on the programme of work taking into account the needs of each subsidiary body will be prepared in consultation with the Chairmen of the Working Groups. As members may recall, at our organizational session it was

(The Chairman)

decided that agenda item 4, regarding nuclear disarmament, will be extended to 1994 for conclusion and a limited number of formal meetings, perhaps four or five, of that Working Group will be held during this substantive session.

It was also decided that item 5, on regional disarmament, and item 6, on the role of science and technology, are to be concluded at the 1993 session. Our programme of work will therefore reflect the fact that a heavier workload is anticipated for Working Group II, on the regional approach to disarmament, and for Working Group III, on the role of science and technology.

(The Chairman)

As representatives may recall, a general programme of work for the entire session has been agreed and circulated as an indicative timetable for the work of the Commission, subject to further adjustment as necessary. It is contained in document A/CN.10/1993/CRP.1, entitled "General Programme of Work".

We also have before us informal paper No. 1 which contains a more detailed timetable for the meetings of the working groups for the first week. The informal paper and the working timetable for the week of 19-23 April was prepared taking into account the concerns that were expressed by some delegations at the organizational meeting held on 14 April. As may be recalled, a number of delegations expressed a preference for a timetable which would avoid simultaneous formal meetings of the working groups, while others felt that, owing to the very heavy workload, such meetings would be unavoidable. The understanding reached was that, for the first week, the Commission would avoid simultaneous formal meetings of the working groups; at the end of the week we would take stock of the situation, the Bureau would meet and at Monday morning's meeting we would receive the first reports from the chairmen of the working groups. We could then take a decision on our timetable for the second week of the session and, possibly, third. The idea reflected in the informal paper is that there are to be no simultaneous formal meetings, although the chairmen of the working groups are free to conduct informal consultations simultaneously with the formal meetings of the working groups. That more or less reflects the understanding reached at the organizational meeting held on 14 April.

As I have stated, there will be a meeting of the expanded Bureau of the Commission with the participation of the chairmen of the three working groups

(The Chairman)

on Friday, 23 April. There will be a meeting of the plenary on Monday, 26 April, to receive the progress reports of the chairmen of the three working groups and to consider questions related to the organization of work in the second and third weeks of the session.

I have also been asked to request all members of the Disarmament Commission to be punctual in attending the scheduled meetings of the Commission and its working groups in order for us to make the most efficient use of conference resources.

With regard to the documentation for the current session, I would refer to the note by the Secretary-General (A/CN.10/174), dated 8 April 1993, which has been distributed to all delegations. The document refers to the relevant reports and documents of the Conference on Disarmament, the General Assembly and the First Committee. I would also point out that last year's report of the Disarmament Commission (A/47/42), as well as the documents listed in the report, will serve as important background documents for the session, particularly the Chairman's papers in the annexes. Previous reports of the Commission, of course, will also be useful for reference purposes.

With regard to the three items on which we will be concentrating our attention during the substantive session, the Commission will presumably have before it a number of working papers to be submitted by delegations or groups of delegations on those subjects. I would invite delegations wishing to submit working papers to the Secretariat as soon as possible for translation and processing.

I should also like to refer to the question of the status of non-governmental organizations. As in previous years, non-govermental organizations are welcome to attend the plenary meetings and the meetings of

(The Chairman)

the Committee of the Whole of the Disarmament Commission as observers. I understand that an intensive programme has been organized by the NGO Committee on Disarmament at the United Nations and the Special NGO Committee on Disarmament, in Geneva, in connection with the current session of the Disarmament Commission.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Mr. ELIASEN (Denmark): On behalf of the European Community and its member States, I have the honour to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the important office of Chairman of the 1993 session of the Disarmament Commission. This election is proof of the recognition of your outstanding skills and professionalism. In this connection I should like to praise the endeavours made by you and by last year's Chairman, through extensive consultations, to reach agreement on the 1993 working agenda. This year's session will be particularly demanding, with no fewer than two agenda items to be concluded. We are, however, confident that under your able guidance, our efforts will be successful. We States members of the European Community, can assure you of our full cooperation to this end.

The reform of the Disarmament Commission, decided upon in 1989 and implemented in 1991, proved useful as demonstrated by the successful completion, last year, of the agenda item "Objective information on military matters" and the adoption of a set of guidelines and recommendations. The resources involved in the accomplishment of this task underscored the appropriateness of the reform and even pointed to the need for further reform measures. In consequence, in its resolution 47/54 A the General Assembly requested the Disarmament Commission to consider the objective of moving its agenda to a three-item phased approach with one item in the first year of

(Mr. Eliasen, Denmark)

consideration, one item in the middle year and one item in its concluding year, with the result that, in principle, one item is added and one item is concluded at each substantive session - the 1993 session being considered as a transitional year. At its organizational session held on 8 December 1992, the Disarmament Commission decided to move its agenda towards such a three-item phased approach.

The European Community and its member States welcome this step to further rationalize and render more effective the work of the Disarmament Commission. They are of the opinion that the work of the Commission should aim at reaching consensus on concrete guidelines or principles likely to be applied universally with a view to enhancing disarmament and international security and that, as recommended in resolution A/C.1/47/L.56, adopted without a vote by the First Committee on 12 March 1993 during its resumed session, every effort should therefore be made to continue to enhance the working methods of the Disarmament Commission so as to enable it to give focused consideration to a limited number of priority issues in the field of disarmament.

(Mr. Eliasen, Denmark)

The significant and unprecedented progress achieved in disarmament and arms control in connection with the end of the cold war and of the East-West confrontation does not mean - unfortunately, and as we all know - that the world has become a safe place in which to live. New uncertainties and new challenges have appeared, such as growing militant nationalism, armed conflicts in an increasing and depressing number of parts of the globe, and an increased danger of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and of excessive and destabilizing accumulations of conventional weapons. Arms control and disarmament are becoming increasingly concerned with non-proliferation and restraint in transfers of arms, as well as with confidence building and transparency. The disposal of weapons and conversion are other aspects of disarmament that are of growing importance.

So, while the ultimate aim of general and complete disarmament, including the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, is maintained, a balanced and comprehensive approach to disarmament is called for in order to reach that ultimate aim and make the world a safer place in which to live.

Such a new, balanced and comprehensive approach to disarmament should be reflected in the work of the various disarmament forums, including that of the Disarmament Commission. We should take full advantage of the new positive attitude towards arms control and disarmament that has emerged owing to the new climate prevailing in international relations, which we have all felt in our own work and which we welcomed, in order to obtain results on priority issues to the benefit of mankind.

Regional disarmament is, in the view of the European Community and its member States, one such priority issue, considering that the regional approach to disarmament is one of the essential elements in the global effort to

(Mr. Eliasen, Denmark)

strengthen international peace and security, arms limitation and disarmament. The impact of regional agreements and arrangements is not limited to the region in question, but goes beyond it. Global disarmament cannot be achieved in a single step, but an increasing number of regional and subregional agreements can support the development of a global disarmament network the stability of which will be enhanced by the scope and functioning of those agreements.

The changes that have taken place in the international situation in recent years have highlighted the importance of the role that regional agreements can and should play in the promotion of international peace and security.

Essential conditions to disarmament, be it regional or global, are the building of confidence through transparency and effective means of verification. In this respect, the European Community and its member States welcome the set of guidelines and recommendations concerning objective information on military matters adopted by the Disarmament Commission last year. They urgently request all Members of the United Nations to contribute to the process of transparency by providing the requested data and information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms by 30 April this year, in accordance with the commitment made through the adoption, without a vote, of resolution 47/52 L, "Transparency in armaments", during the latest session of the General Assembly; by providing the information requested in resolution 46/36 H, "International arms transfers"; by making their confidence-building measures returns within the framework of the biological and toxin weapons Convention pursuant to resolution 46/35 A; and by reporting on military budgets in accordance with resolution 40/91 B.

(Mr. Eliasen, Denmark)

We also call upon all States which have not done so to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the bacteriological and toxin weapons Convention, and to sign the chemical-weapons Convention; this would contribute to international peace and security and would have positive effects on international disarmament.

The European Community and its member States have often given prominence to the European experience in the field of regional disarmament. The coming into force of the Treaty on conventional forces in Europe (CFE) limiting land and air equipment and providing verification measures, the CFE 1A agreement limiting the number of military personnel, the 1992 Vienna Document, and the Open Skies Treaty enhancing confidence- and security-building in the region are the most prominent results of European disarmament achieved in 1992. On the basis of those important treaties, the European Community and its member States are continuing their efforts in the field of regional disarmament after the end of the East-West conflict within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). We have thus taken an active part in the creation of the CSCE Forum for Security Cooperation in Vienna, which was established last September and which has already engaged in efforts with a view to promoting a common basis for further arms-control and transparency measures and to establishing a code of conduct governing mutual relations among CSCE States in the field of security.

We have done this because we are convinced that now, after the end of the cold war, which divided Europe artificially for more than 40 years, we face a historic chance to shape a new cooperative order of security in our region, and because we hope in that way to promote the global efforts to strengthen peace and security, arms limitation and disarmament.

(Mr. Eliasen, Denmark)

We are conscious, however, that the European model is not necessarily one that can be applied unaltered to other regions. The various regions of the world have their own particular characteristics. Individual States have security interests of their own, reflecting the prevailing circumstances in their regions.

(Mr. Eliasen, Denmark)

Therefore, as already stressed by the European Community and its member States in their Working paper submitted to the Disarmament Commission in 1991,

> "Initiatives should take into account particular characteristics of each region and should lead to stability and security for all the participating States. The States in the region should themselves define appropriate and specific conditions for the security of their region, as well as conditions for ensuring their security in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and generally recognized principles of international law." (A/CN.10/154, para. 2.2)

Whenever possible, the Community and its member States will continue to stimulate and support initiatives that lead to increased security in a region. We are convinced that the search for regional stability must be pursued in order to enhance security at the lowest possible level of military forces, curbing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and promoting economic and social progress.

The positive trend in disarmament negotiations confronts us with a problem in relation to the implementation of disarmament agreements: the disposal in a safe, transparent, cost-effective and environmentally sound manner of surplus militarily material, including weapons of mass destruction and, in the case of nuclear weapons, their fissile material. The role of science and technology is evident in this respect, and it is also of vital importance in connection with the conversion of production facilities from military to civilian purposes and methods for verification of compliance with arms-control and disarmament agreements. The European Community and its member States are therefore convinced, as stated in resolution 47/44, that progress in the application of science and technology contributes

(Mr. Eliasen, Denmark)

substantially to the implementation of arms-control and disarmament agreements. We believe that science and technology thus contribute to the enhancement of international peace and security and the promotion of the social and economic development of mankind.

In view of the overall importance of disarmament-related technologies, all possibilities should be examined through multilateral dialogue, with a view to making these technologies available on a global scale, bearing in mind the proposal for seeking universally acceptable international norms or guidelines that would regulate international transfers of high technology with military applications.

For a considerable time, nuclear disarmament has been one of the priority topics on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission. The need for progress in this field requires that continued proper attention be paid to such issues, which deserve continued discussion in the Commission.

Nuclear disarmament continues to be one of the highest priorities of the European Community and its member States. While welcoming the considerable progress made in this area in recent years - for example, the INF Treaty and the START agreements, including the Lisbon Protocol - it remains our common wish to see further reductions in the global level of nuclear weapons. The two members of the European Community which are nuclear-weapon States have made a meaningful contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament, in particular by making reductions in some of their nuclear-weapon programmes. In view of the dramatic reductions in nuclear weapons now in prospect, priority should be given to the rapid and safe implementation of existing nuclear-arms-control arrangements.

(Mr. Eliasen, Denmark)

With regard to nuclear testing, the European Community and its member States welcome the further steps taken towards limiting nuclear testing. We believe that nuclear-test-ban issues should continue to be actively addressed and be given priority in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. In this connection, the European Community and its member States have noted with great interest the proposal by France that the representatives of the five nuclear-weapon States to the Conference should consult on these issues.

Along with their support for nuclear-arms reductions, the European Community and its member States reconfirm their strong commitment to preventing nuclear proliferation, which represents one of the greatest threats to global security and stability facing the international community. The evidence that Iraq was engaged in a clandestine nuclear-weapons programme has highlighted the need to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The European community and its member States believe that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is a cornerstone of the international nuclear-non-proliferation regime and that the indefinite extension of the Treaty at its 1995 extension conference will be a key step in the development of that regime. We therefore welcome the important recent accessions to the NPT and the strengthening of the safeguards regime.

The process of nuclear-arms control and reduction must be continued, and we call upon all States which have not yet done so to accede to the NPT and to put all their nuclear material under full-scope safeguards arrangements. We believe that universal accession to the Treaty and full compliance with its applications is the best way to guarantee nuclear non-proliferation.

(Mr. Eliasen, Denmark)

In this connection, the European Community and its member States are deeply concerned that Kazakhstan and Ukraine have yet to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States in fulfilment of their commitment in the Lisbon Protocol. Accession would facilitate their further integration into the international community.

The unprecedented announcement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its intention to withdraw from the NPT has caused great concern in the international community, as such a step can only be detrimental to the non-proliferation regime as a whole and to international peace and stability. The European Community and its member States therefore strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to reverse its declared intention and fulfil its applications under the NPT and its safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

(Mr. Eliasen, Denmark)

The European Community and its member States note with great concern that in the past the South African Government pursued a nuclear-weapon programme. We appreciate President De Klerk's statement that South Africa has dismantled its nuclear capability and is adhering to the provisions of the non-proliferation Treaty. We welcome President De Klerk's offer to open all records on the nuclear-weapon programme to international inspection.

Finally, the European Community and its member States wish once more to assure members of their cooperation in the endeavours of the Disarmament Commission to make progress on the agenda item on nuclear disarmament and to bring its deliberations on regional disarmament and the role of science and technology to a fruitful conclusion in the form of a set of general guidelines and recommendations which can contribute to the enhancement of arms control and disarmament and consequently to increased peace and security in the world.

Mr. OVALLE (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): I am particularly pleased to be congratulating a representative from Latin America and the Caribbean on his election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at a key stage in its work; I am sure that your experience and knowledge of the subject, Mr. Chairman, as well as your diplomatic skills, promise very good results. Furthermore, Sir, you come from a country, Brazil, that is both close and dear to my own, and our two nations, as long ago as the beginning of the century, pointed the way for the world by outlining methods of collaborating on détente, disarmament and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Allow me also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau, whose contributions we are sure will greatly benefit the work of the Disarmament Commission.

(Mr. Ovalle, Chile)

We are living at a time which, since the end of the cold war, has been defined in United Nations circles as the era of the democratization of international relations. The revitalization of the work of the Organization in areas such as peace-keeping does seem to indicate that this is true. However, disarmament in general and this Commission in particular are facing situations that are far removed from the optimism which is inspiring the international community and far from the specific achievements that our peoples are so urgently calling for. In this regard, I should like to refer to two specific aspects, the agenda of the Disarmament Commission and its decision-making machinery, before I express the views of the Chilean Government on the susbstantive topics before us at this session.

My delegation observes with concern what could be regarded as the manifest intent on the part of a minority of the members of this Commission to diminish the importance of the deliberative role of this body which, by its nature, is unique within the United Nations structure in its handling of disarmament issues. In this respect, proposals such as those made by the delegations of Sweden and Colombia to include on the Commission's agenda items that are absolutely valid in terms of disarmament problems are encountering insurmountable obstacles as a result of the actions of a small number of States. Does this not run counter to respect for the so-called democratization of international relations?

Nor can my delegation comprehend why the legitimate concern for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction - an issue that some delegations, including in the Security Council, have requested should be considered - cannot be dealt with in the Disarmament Commission, which is the natural forum for addressing it, because of the opposition of those States.

(Mr. Ovalle, Chile)

Concerning the Commission's decision-making machinery, consensus, my delegation believes that the time has come to reassess the use of that system of adopting resolutions and decisions. From a legal point of view, consensus is not embodied in any of the basic documents of the United Nations. From a practical standpoint, it is true that it has made it possible to achieve a convergence of positions that might have appeared irreconcilable, but this, in most cases, has been to the detriment of the substance of the resolutions and decisions concerned. From a procedural point of view, consensus is an anti-democratic institution, since it subordinates the adoption of a text to the unanimity of the participants, meaning that the opposition of just one participant is enough to scotch a collective effort. What this is is a veto, and is particularly effective when exercised by those who are powerful enough to avoid being pressured.

In this respect, my delegation believes that the time has come to restore consensus to the function for which it was created, namely, that of a subsidiary mechanism in the adoption of resolutions or decisions, as has been said by the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly set up pursuant to resolution 2632 (XXV) of 9 November 1970. Moreover, less than two weeks ago, a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council renounced consensus as a decision-making mechanism.

By way of a conclusion to these preliminary comments, my delegation believes that the time has come to reinforce the work of the Disarmament Commission. In this move, the adoption of a three-topic plan of work seems to us to be a valid move, and my delegation fully supports it. Furthermore, there seems to be a need to study how to get round the current difficulties involved in taking decisions in the Commission.

(Mr. Ovalle, Chile)

The item on the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields is of particular importance for countries such as Chile. My Government takes the view that in this area general principles do exist that must be preserved in any text approved by the Commission; these include the principles that there should be no impediment to the tranfer of scientific and technological knowledge for peaceful purposes; that the use of scientific and technological advances for military purposes is a cause for concern for the international community; that the application of science and technology for the purpose of legitimate self-defence under the United Nations Charter is acceptable; that science and technology have manifold applications in disarmament, particularly in the verification of disarmament agreements; that the resources devoted to military applications of science and technology can be converted to civilian purposes, particularly environmental protection and the promotion of economic and social progress; and that the machinery must be improved in order to ensure that transfers of dual-purpose technology are devoted to peaceful purposes.

(Mr. Ovalle, Chile)

In regard to the item entitled "Relationship between regional disarmament and international security and arms limitation and disarmament", my delegation believes that since there are common elements in the two documents submitted by the Chairman of the respective Working Group at the Commission's last session, there is a definite possibility of drawing up norms on this subject acceptable to the majority of delegations.

President Aylwin's Government is committed to the cause of disarmament, and in particular to the need to adopt effective measures on regional disarmament. This was demonstrated by the fact that we signed the Medoza Declaration and that we have continued the process designed to give practical effect to the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Furthermore, and without prejudice to the possibility of exchanging experience in the field of regional disarmament, my Government believes that the regional disarmament measures that should be adopted should take into account the special characteristics of each region and the existing provisions, in particular the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant international instruments.

So far as the existence of interregional military alliances is concerned, my delegation favours the application of standards for reduction that are proportionate to each case and that respect the principle of minimum sufficiency for defence. In other words, we stress the key function of the major military Powers, since it is they that will be making the greatest reductions in their military arsenals and that have the responsibility not to create conditions of instability or to interfere in regions extraneous to their field of action.

(Mr. Ovalle, Chile)

Lastly, my delegation wishes to place on record once again its unconditional support for the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes, since experience indicates that this is a key element in promoting and maintaining both regional and international security and stability.

I wish to conclude by reaffirming to you, Mr. Chairman, our commitment to working constructively under your leadership, mindful that the new political, economic and social circumstances in the world give the Disarmament Commission a vital role to play if we wish to pass on to our children a safer world of greater solidarity, in which our major efforts will be focused on the achievement of sustainable development for mankind and not on adding to or refining weapons to destroy mankind.

Mr. WHANNOU (Benin) (interpretation from French): First of all, the delegation of Benin, like other delegations that have already taken part in this discussion, congratulates you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission for 1993. We also congratulate, through you, the other officers of the Commission. Your knowledge and skill in international affairs, as well as your commitment to your task, guarantee that our deliberations will be successful.

We have other reasons to be particularly pleased to see a representative of Brazil presiding over our work. Indeed, our two countries - over and above their age-old cultural affinities, among others, belong to the South Atlantic Zone of Peace and Cooperation, which includes countries of Africa and South America and whose purpose is to eliminate the risks of tension and the causes of conflict in this maritime region that unites them and that is of such strategic and economic importance in the world.

(Mr. Whannou, Benin)

We wish to pay a tribute to your predecessor, Sir, the representative of Hungary, Ambassador André Erdös, who guided our deliberations in 1992 with competence and devotion.

We are grateful to the Office of Disarmament Affairs, whose assistance has never failed us. This was particularly true during the preparation of this substantive session devoted to important issues in the disarmament process. We also once again express our appreciation for the Secretary-General's report on "New dimensions in arms control and disarmament in the post-cold-war period", which provides us with food for thought on this matter.

In this period of constant changes on the international scene, and especially at a time when the world is becoming ever more interdependent, agreed multilateral measures are certainly the context in which to cope effectively with what are now common problems, such as the need to guarantee security for all, including without any shadow of a doubt the elimination of the aggressive capacity of the protagonists on the international arena that is constituted by overarmament.

The conclusion - to be sure, after several years of negotiations - of the International Convention on the Elimination of Chemical Weapons, of which Benin was among the first signatories in Paris in 13 January 1993, convinces us that together we can achieve a real treaty on general and complete disarmament which is internationally verifiable.

But how can we avoid interminable negotiations, which are often pointless, if not by prior efforts of sustained reflection, to prepare the way to the achievement of our objectives, set forth in particular in the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, the first special session devoted to general and complete disarmament under

(Mr. Whannou, Benin)

international control: hence the great importance of the Disarmament Commission, in which the recent relaunching of the dialogue between the multilateral disarmament mechanisms reaffirmed the nature of the Commission as a specialized deliberative body. As such, the Commission has demonstrated its effectiveness, beginning with the consistent implementation of the recommendations on the rationalization of its work. In fact - to mention only this point - the Commission has already prepared specific recommendations on objective information on military matters; indeed, the disarmament process cannot move forward without recourse to collateral confidence-building measures, such as the establishment of appropriate machinery for transparency and verification, making it possible to dispel fear, suspicion, tensions and, therefore, the risks of military confrontations.

But to ensure progress in this process, we must have recourse also to specific measures. It is on such measures, among others, that the three items on our agenda are focused - namely, the process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons; the regional approach to disarmament within the context of global security; and the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields.

Is it not encouraging for the development of our deliberations that in the report on our 1992 substantive session we have already singled out together the elements of these items on which we should focus - this time thoroughly - our consideration?

On the question of nuclear disarmament, we see that the commitment to a policy of nuclear deterrence to guarantee national security is an impediment to the elimination of nuclear weapons. Indeed, this policy encourages the

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retention of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery in order to prevent adversary from using them in case of a conflict, even though he is convinced that the price of their use, that is, mutual destruction, is greater than the benefit. That is the reason for the great efforts made to stockpile these weapons, including tests - despite what they do to the environment - in order to refine, perfect and maintain them. But this policy only increases the risks of dissemination of such weapons and the danger of the destruction of mankind, even by accident. There is already an awareness in the world of this danger with its incalculable consequences.

In the opinion of the delegation of Benin, the commitment to a policy of nuclear deterrence is not only inconsistent with that awareness but also obsolete in an international context where the trend is more and more towards cooperation.

(Mr. Whannou, Benin)

Thus, we believe that it is in the interest of all States to commit themselves firmly to the total elimination of this scourge of our time, beginning, inter alia, with the complete cessation of nuclear-weapons testing with a view to updating and perfecting them; the prevention of a nuclear war and the dismantling of nuclear weapons deployed beyond national frontiers; security guarantees that make all non-nuclear-weapon States safe from the use or threat of use of these weapons; the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime, with particular stress on the scope of the safeguard clauses of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) covering the objective and non-selective control of installations with dual military and peaceful uses; mandatory inspection of suspect civilian nuclear installations; sanctions against those who seek to conceal the facts; and the immediate reconversion of military nuclear installations to peaceful purposes.

With this elimination in mind, we should transform the non-proliferation Treaty into a genuine treaty of comprehensive nuclear disarmament and international cooperation for the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, like the International Convention on the Elimination of Chemical Weapons.

But at a time when it is necessary to make the non-proliferation Treaty a true instrument of nuclear disarmament, we can only deplore the fact that one State Party recently decided to withdraw from the Treaty, the strength of which, despite its flaws, now lies in the support of the majority that it continues to enjoy. We therefore urge the withdrawing State here and now to reconsider its unprecedented decision and to seek a just solution to its concerns within the context of its IAEA safeguard agreements. This will help to reduce tensions in the Korean peninsula, not without effect on international peace and security.

(Mr. Whannou, Benin)

It is undeniable that, since States begin to arm or even overarm themselves in response to their sense of insecurity in their respective regions, global disarmament cannot move forward without regional disarmament, which has the advantage of promoting security and reducing tension in one region while necessarily contributing to disarmament and security in the world.

But we must avoid incoherence and overcome the obstacles inherent in the characteristics of each region. That is why we share the view that regional disarmament agreements that have been freely entered into must respect the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and comply with international law, existing disarmament agreements, and the Final Document of the 1978 first special session devoted to general and complete disarmament.

The foregoing are essential principles to be borne in mind.

The measures themselves will bear on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; the establishment, as needed, of nuclear-weapon-free zones or denuclearized zones and zones of peace and cooperation that may cover several regions; all measures capable of increasing confidence to slow down or even halt the arms race or eliminate the threat of conflicts; the reduction of military expenditure hindering the improvement of peoples' socio-economic conditions; and a campaign not only against excessive transfers of weapons, particularly conventional weapons, exceeding the legitimate needs of self-defence, but also against the illicit traffic in conventional weapons, which promotes drug traffic, terrorism, destabilization, and so on.

Efforts will also be made to establish the conditions necessary for reducing tension by firmly attacking its causes, be they internal - for instance, by promoting popular participation in public affairs and especially

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by promoting respect for human rights, including political and civil rights; be they regional - for instance, by refraining from resorting to the use of force in settlement of disputes; or be they global, such as obstacles to the development of trade and the better distribution of the fruits of the world economy. These are preventive measures to limit the damage while it is still possible and to avoid having to carry out peace-keeping or peacemaking operations at considerable cost and often of uncertain outcome. This precaution requires the establishment of an early-warning system as advocated by the Secretary-General in his "Agenda for Peace".

The re-emergence of regional conflicts, long contained or overshadowed by world-wide antagonisms that are now disappearing, today makes regional disarmament imperative in preventing the spread of these conflicts.

The use of science and technology in the service of war has led, during the past 50 years, to the quantitative and qualitative development of weapons that today threaten the planet with destruction. To those military threats we can add non-military threats arising from the absence of conditions that must be met through scientific and technological progress if we are to enjoy economic and ecological security. Indeed, whereas considerable sums can be invested in the manufacture and upkeep of sophisticated offensive and defensive military matériel, a large segment of the world's people live in total impoverishment and have no access even to the must rudimentary science and technological achievements that would have allowed them to fight, inter alia, against infant mortality and a constantly decreasing life expectancy. As to ecological insecurity, that is due, as was emphasized by the Rio Conference of June 1992 on the environment and development, to economic growth in the North and to development in the South at the expense of preserving the

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environment, jeopardizing our quality of life and the existence of future generations.

But we can still reverse this apocalyptic trend and strengthen international peace and security by turning to the peaceful uses of science and technology, which are supposed to be inherently neutral. In the field of disarmament, technological progress - such as verification, for example, by the satellite control advocated some time ago by the French delegation - will be decisive in the implementation of disarmament agreements, which are difficult to achieve so long as the parties involved do not have for their national environments security assurances that constitute compliance with those agreements. Scientific and technological progress will also allow the implementation of such disarmament agreements as the destruction of existing weapons without risk to health and environment.

In the field of economic and ecologic security, we will have to turn to development and sustainable economic growth strategies through technology benefiting everyone. However, in an effective and non-discriminatory manner, we will also have to prevent the spread of dual-use military and civilian technologies from leading to their use in the qualitative improvement and manufacture of weapons systems, particularly those of mass destruction, often with the complicity of profit-seeking suppliers.

I should like to say a few words about security. To be effective, security must be universal and thus the largest majority possible must participate in its establishment and support; hence the importance of the United Nations unique role in attaining the objectives of all the items we have just reviewed. The Final Document of the tenth special session could not be clearer in this regard.

(Mr. Whannou, Benin)

Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter provides for the establishment of regional arrangements:

"For dealing with such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action."

Regional disarmament efforts, together with global efforts, must therefore enjoy the total support of the United Nations, which will then step up, for instance, its financial support of the regional United Nations Centres for peace, disarmament and development so that these Centres are better able to programme and carry out their activities, in particular rallying public opinion in favour of disarmament, research and the holding of seminars on specific problems of security and disarmament adapted to their respective regions, and so on.

As we begin our work, the delegation of Benin would like to express its hope that our Commission's spirit of joint action will allow us to formulate recommendations acceptable to all, since we will have to complete two agenda items with a view to inscribing two new items for the session to come.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.